

BULLETIN NO. 00-11F

DATE _____

CHANGES ADOPTED EFFECTIVE 8/1/00

Maintain Manual - See instructions below.

 X **Proposed Regulation - Retain bulletin and attachments until you receive Manual Maintenance Bulletin _____**
Information or Instructions - Retain until _____

The federal Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is now offering states waiver approval of a modified requirement to report earned income almost identical to Vermont's modified requirement. Under the FNS modification, households would report changes from part-time hours to full-time hours and vice versa, instead of reporting changes of more than five hours of work per week expected to last a month. States may define the number of hours considered full-time for this purpose.

This bulletin requires households to report increases to 40 or more regularly scheduled hours of work per week and decreases to fewer than 40 regularly scheduled hours, instead of changes of more than five hours of work per week expected to last a month. The department believes that this change will simplify change reporting for food stamp households with fluctuating earnings and increase the accuracy of food stamp benefits to Vermont households.

FNS approved Vermont's waiver request on May 1, 2000.

New Approach to Vermont's Food Stamp Policy

The language, organization, and content of the department's food stamp policy follows that of the Code of Federal Regulations. This approach to Vermont's policy was instituted about 20 years ago, when states were required to follow the letter of federal food stamp rules with little opportunity for state flexibility. During recent years, however, the federal government has made more food stamp options available to states. Accordingly, the department has re-examined its approach to developing food stamp policy and believes that its policy would be more comprehensible, concise, and easy to use if the language and organization followed Vermont requirements instead of the federal rules. As a first step in the reorganization of Vermont's food stamp policy, this bulletin eliminates several sections not applicable to Vermont and rewrites sections to improve clarity without changing content.

Specific policy changes include:

273.12a 1 Details the requirements to report changes in earned and unearned income. Incorporates the PP&D of April 1, 1999, including the clarification of reporting household members' combined changes in unearned income totaling more than \$25.

Adds the requirement to report a change when a job increases to 40 or more regularly scheduled hours of work per week or decreases to fewer than 40 regularly scheduled hours.

Without changing policy content, creates and rennumbers new subparagraphs for clarity; clarifies language to make it Vermont specific; deletes an unnecessary Vermont Note; and corrects punctuation.

273.12a 2 Eliminates reference to optional procedures that Vermont does not use.

273.12a 3 Simplifies the language without changing the content of policy.

273.12a 4 Deletes language pertaining to federal food stamp options not chosen by Vermont.

Incorporates the content of the Vermont Note into policy.

273.12a 5 Revises the language to make it specific to Vermont without changing the content of policy.

A public hearing was held on May 15, 2000, at 10:00 a.m., in the Skylight Conference Room, State Office Complex, Waterbury. No one attended.

The deadline for written comments was 4:30 p.m., on May 22, 2000. No one submitted written comments.

The rule was reviewed and approved by the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules on June 14, 2000.

The content of this rule has not changed since the filing of the proposed rule on April 14, 2000.

Vertical lines in the left margin indicate significant changes. Dotted lines at the left indicate changes to clarify, rearrange, correct references, etc., without changing regulation content.

Manual Maintenance:

MANUAL HOLDERS: Please maintain manuals assigned to you as follows.
You will need both the proposed and the final bulletin to
Maintain your manuals

Remove

273.12a 1 (98-4)
273.12a 4 i (98-4)

Insert

273.12a 1 (00-11)
nothing

8/1/00

Bulletin No. 00-11

273.12a 1

273.12 Reporting Changesa. Household Responsibility To Report

1. Certified households are required to report the following changes in circumstances:
 - i. Changes in the sources of earned or unearned income.
 - ii. Changes in the hourly earnings or salary rate, increases to 40 or more regularly scheduled hours of work per week, or decreases to fewer than 40 regularly scheduled hours of work per week.
 - iii. Changes in the amount of gross monthly unearned income of more than \$25, excluding changes in public assistance. Gross monthly income for this purpose is the combined unearned income of all household members.
 - iv. All changes in household composition, such as the addition or loss of a household member.
 - v. Changes in residence and the resulting change in shelter costs.
 - vi. The acquisition of a licensed vehicle not fully excludable under 273.8(e).
 - vii. When cash on hand, stocks, bonds, and money in a bank account or savings institution reach or exceed a total of \$2,000.
 - viii. Changes in the legally obligated child support paid by a household member for which the household receives an income deduction in accordance with 273.9 (d)(7).
2. Certified households shall report changes within 10 days of the date the change becomes known to the household.
3. An applying household shall report all changes related to its food stamp eligibility and benefits at the certification interview. If a reportable change identified in paragraph (a)(1) of this section occurs between the interview and the date of the notice of eligibility, the household shall report the change within 10 days of the date of the notice of eligibility.
4. The reporting requirements provided in this section constitute the only food stamp reporting requirements.